

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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DIA WASHDC
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CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK
COMSIXTHFLT NAPLES IT
CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA
CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 07017

CNO FOR OP 616; JCS FOR DJS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, MILI, UR
SUBJECT: INCIDENTS AT SEA, ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

1. SUMMARY. SOVIET NAVY NOTE OF 5 APRIL 1978 ALLEGES
USS SOUTH CAROLINA VIOLATED RULES OF THE NAUTICAL ROAD
AND THE INCIDENT AT SEA (INCSEA) AGREEMENT BY CONDUCTING
DANGEROUS MANEUVERS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO SOVIET SHIPS IN
THE MEDITERRANEAN ON 29 AND 30 MARCH 1978.

2. AT 1200 ON 6 APRIL 1978 ALUSNA MET WITH CAPT 1/R SERKOV,
MAIN NAVY STAFF, AT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE DIRECTORATE OF
FOREIGN RELATIONS (UVS) AND RECEIVED A NOTE DATED 5 APRIL
1978 CONTAINING ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE INCSEA AGREE-
MENT. AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF THE NOTE FOLLOWS:
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QUOTE. THE DIRECTORATE OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF THE USSR PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS
TO THE OFFICE OF THE NAVAL ATTACHE, U.S. EMBASSY, AND IN
ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE VII OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
GOVERNMENTS OF THE USSR AND THE USA FOR PREVENTION OF
INCIDENTS ON AND OVER THE HIGH SEAS HAS THE HONOR TO
INFORM YOU OF THE FOLLOWING:

"1. ON THE NIGHT OF 29 MARCH 1978, IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA THE SOVIET ASW CRUISER "MOSKVA" WAS UNDERWAY REFUELLING BY THE ABEAM METHOD FROM THE TANKER "BUBOV" (COURSE-330 DEGREES, SPEED-10 KNOTS). IN THIS RESPECT, THE LIGHTS OF THE CRUISER WERE SET TO THE SIGNAL OF A SHIP LIMITED IN MANEUVERABILITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULES OF THE NAUTICAL ROAD 1972.

AT 2120 (MOSCOW TIME) AT A POINT 34-47N, 023-37E THE US NAVY NUCLEAR-POWERED CRUISER "SOUTH CAROLINA" (SIDE NUMBER 37), PROCEEDING ON A RECIPROCAL COURSE AT A SPEED OF 14 KNOTS, PASSED BY AT A DISTANCE OF 1.8 CABLES FROM THE PORT SIDE OF THE SOVIET SHIP. THEN THE US NAVY CRUISER REVERSED COURSE AND AT 2125 FELL IN ASTERN OF THE CRUISER "MOSKVA" AT A DISTANCE OF 2.8 CABLES. THE AMERICAN SHIP DID NOT REACT TO SIGNALS OF THE SOVIET SHIP WARNING OF THE DANGEROUS MANEUVER.

BY HER ACTIONS THE CRUISER "SOUTH CAROLINA" HAS VIOLATED THE REQUIREMENTS OF POINTS 4 AND 8 OF ARTICLE III OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF INCIDENTS ON THE HIGH SEAS AND CONTRARY TO THE RULES OF THE NAUTICAL ROAD 1972 AND GOOD SEA PRACTICES HINDERED AND EXPOSED TO DANGER A SHIP REPLENISHING UNDERWAY.

"2. ON 30 MARCH 1978 AT 1645 THE US NAVY NUCLEAR-POWERED CRUISER "SOUTH CAROLINA," PROCEEDING AT A SPEED OF 4 KNOTS PASSED AT A DISTANCE OF 15 METERS ALONG PORT SIDE OF THE SOVIET DESTROYER "SMELIY" LYING AT ANCHOR AT A
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POINT 36-01.5N AND 022-50.0E. SHE DID REACT TO THE SIGNALS OF THE SOVIET SHIP. ABOVE LINE SHOULD READ "DID NOT REACT."

IN THIS CASE THE AMERICAN SHIP FLAGRANTLY BROKE THE REQUIREMENTS OF POINTS 1, 4 AND 5 OF ARTICLE III OF THE AGREEMENT ON PREVENTION OF INCIDENTS ON THE HIGH SEAS, AND THE ACTIONS OF ITS COMMANDER CREATED REAL DANGER OF COLLISION WITH A SHIP AT ANCHOR.

THE NAVAL COMMAND OF THE USSR EXPRESSES THE HOPE THAT THE US NAVY COMMAND WILL EXAMINE THESE FACTS WITH DUE ATTENTION AND TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO AVOID SIMILAR DANGEROUS ACTIONS IN THE FUTURE."

THE DIRECTORATE AVAILS ITSELF OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSURE THE OFFICE OF THE NAVAL ATTACHE OF ITS REGARD.
UNQUOTE.

3. ALUSNA READ THE NOTE, ACKNOWLEDGED ITS CONTENTS AND STATED THAT IT WOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES. CAPT SERKOV DREW A DIAGRAM OF THE FIRST INCIDENT AND POINTED OUT HOW THE WAVES FROM SUCH A MANEUVER ENDANGER SHIPS ENGAGED IN UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN THE SECOND INSTANCE THE SHIP HAD COME SO CLOSE THAT SAILORS COULD JUMP FROM ONE TO THE OTHER. HE FINISHED WITH SOME UNKIND PERSONAL CUTS DIRECTED

TOWARD THE CAPTAIN OF "SOUTH CAROLINA." AT THIS POINT
ALUSNA INTERRUPTED AND CHANGED THE SUBJECT.

4. THE ORIGINAL NOTE WILL BE POUCHED TO CNO AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE. TOON

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NNN

Message Attributes

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